Government Services

Business Plan 1999-2000 to 2001-02 - *restated*

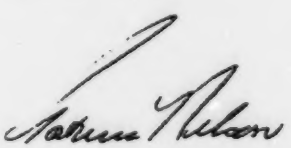
Accountability Statement

As a result of government re-organization announced on May 25, 1999, the Ministry Business Plans included in Budget '99 have been restated to reflect the new Ministry organizations as at November 17, 1999.

The restated Business Plan for the Ministry of Government Services for the three years commencing April 1, 1999, was prepared in accordance with the Government Accountability Act and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at February 23, 1999, with material economic or fiscal implications have been considered.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.

For information, the restated Business Plan includes 1999-2000 Second Quarter forecast information that reflects developments that have occurred during the 1999-2000 fiscal year.



Patricia L. Nelson
Minister of Government Services
November 17, 1999

102-03644/

Mission

Government Services helps ensure a fair marketplace, guarantees a high-quality and accessible registry information service for Albertans, and is committed to effectiveness and affordability in the delivery of it's services.

Introduction

Alberta has one of the most vibrant economies in Canada. With this growth comes opportunities and challenges for Albertans, as well as added pressures on Government Services' core businesses. This business plan is a summary of these pressures and the Ministry's response to them. The first key response that this newly formed department will undertake is the development of a new vision that will address the needs of Albertans.

Increased Demands on Registries' Systems
The demand for Registries' products and services continues to increase, particularly in the area of land and motor vehicle transactions. Revenues increased by $21.7 million or 8.6 percent in 1997-98. Continued growth is expected and will put increased demands on the existing systems. Additional pressures come from Albertans' expectations of high quality and convenient service. Reinvestment in Registries' systems will be needed to meet these challenges and to successfully adopt new and innovative ways of doing business.

A Fair Marketplace for Albertans
The significant growth in Alberta's economy has resulted in an increased number of consumer issues, particularly in the areas of home renovations and landlord/tenant complaints. The Ministry is working towards putting an effective legislative and regulatory framework in place to ensure a fair marketplace for Alberta businesses and consumers. The Ministry will continue to strengthen relationships with other jurisdictions to deal with increasing cross-border transactions that result in consumer losses.

Key Directions

Government Goals	The Ministry's activities will support the government's goals for the benefit of all Albertans and Alberta's communities.
Accountability	The Ministry's accountability framework will guide those agencies delivering services for the Ministry.
Partnerships	The Ministry will establish, where appropriate, partnerships for more effective and cost-efficient service delivery.
Communications	The Ministry will ensure good communication with its customers and partners and maintain strong working relationships.
Flexible Solutions	Service models will target areas of greatest need and will be flexible to encourage innovation, cost efficiency and meeting customer needs.

The majority of the strategies in this business plan support the recommendations of the Growth Summit and are identified by an asterisk. The strategies also support government goals, cross-government initiatives, and goals and strategies in other ministries' business plans and/or joint business plans such as the Business Plan for Alberta's Children.

Cross-Government Initiatives

Albertans benefit when departments work together to provide programs and services. While each of the Ministry's two core businesses have their own specific goals and strategies, many involve initiatives that require consultation and/or direct involvement with other ministries. Some of the more significant cross-government initiatives include:

Initiatives where Alberta Government Services Plays a Supporting Role

Traffic Safety Initiative
On April 1, 1996, all Alberta road safety programs and relevant legislation were consolidated under Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Government Services retained ownership of the motor vehicle computer system and continues to provide many of the functions and services relating to motor vehicle registration. The Ministry is working with Alberta Infrastructure to implement the necessary changes to the motor vehicles computer system to support the Traffic Safety Initiative being undertaken by that Ministry.

Additional Products Available through Registries
Registries, through cooperative efforts with Alberta Resource Development, is developing a method to provide mineral lease information through Registries On-line and the Registry Agent network.

Payment of Fines
In order to fulfill its mandate of "one-stop shopping", Registries continues to work with other ministries to ensure as many services as possible are available through registry agents. Registries is actively working with Alberta Justice to make systems changes necessary to allow the payment of current fines for traffic offences through agent offices.

Ministry Core Businesses

CORE BUSINESS #1 - REGISTRIES

Ensure continued excellence in the delivery of licensing, registration and information services to Albertans

Individuals and businesses benefit from improved access to Registries' products and services through innovative delivery systems. Alberta Government Services provides public and private sectors with secure, timely and high-quality information, registration, and licensing services at a competitive cost.

Goal #1 Provide a consistently high level of service across all registry areas

The provision of accessible, timely, accurate and secure information from Land Titles, Foreign Ownership of Land Administration, Corporate Registry, Vital Statistics, Motor Vehicles and Personal Property helps facilitate business transactions between Registries' service delivery partners and the public to improve business and individual decision making in the province. Service excellence is important and will be monitored by detailed performance standards and a comprehensive accountability framework.

Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Develop a comprehensive accountability framework, including performance standards and customer satisfaction assessments, to enhance the integrity of the service delivery processes.*	Ongoing
• Enhance policies and procedures to ensure that Registries' access to information standards reflect fair information practices.	1999-2000
• Implement administrative systems and processes to ensure the Foreign Ownership of Land Program is consistent with the intent of the legislation.	Ongoing

Goal #2 Reinvest in technology to sustain revenues and system integrity

Registries has large computer systems that support the motor vehicles, land titles and personal property licensing and registration processes. These systems generate an important source of revenue for the government. In 1997-98, the gross revenue from the sale of products and services was $275.5 million. This represents a 21% increase from 1992-93. It is projected that the growth in transactions and the increase in revenue will continue, putting increased demands on the existing systems. These systems also play an important role in supporting law enforcement initiatives involving public safety and security, and other interdepartmental initiatives.

Registries needs to reinvest in its existing systems to protect this important source of revenue, enable law enforcement activities, and to ensure the security and integrity of personal information. The Ministry needs to undertake a major restructuring of Registries' systems over the next five years to redevelop the three mainframe application systems and to keep pace with the rapidly changing marketplace and volume demands. Registries needs the ability and flexibility to finance the redevelopment of its systems.

Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Explore private-sector partnerships to fund the re-engineering of the motor vehicles, land titles and personal property systems.	1999-2002
• Pursue leading edge redevelopment of the Alberta Land Titles System in a modular manner, pursuing partnership opportunities with other jurisdictions and specialized service providers with the intent of shared benefits and reduced costs. The first year	1999-2000 (Phase 1)

* denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations

Key Strategies	Time Frames
of the business plan will focus on defining redevelopment, scope and funding options. Implementation should commence in the second year of the business plan and be phased in over five years.*	2000-2005 (Phase 2)
• Partner with Infrastructure to develop a vision and redevelopment plan for a new Motor Vehicles system which would benefit both ministries. Implementation of the vision and redevelopment plan will take place in phase 2.*	1999-2000 (Phase 1) 2000-2005 (Phase 2)
• Investigate redevelopment approaches for the existing Personal Property Registration System including short-term improvements and longer-range possibilities.*	1999-2000
• Design a Foreign Ownership of Land administration system.*	1999-2000
• Modify the Corporate Registry and Vital Statistics systems to reflect feedback from service delivery partners (e.g., registry agents, law firms, Health and Wellness) and the public.*	Ongoing

Goal #3 Partner with other ministries, jurisdictions and the private sector to promote innovative business opportunities

Registries has excelled in developing cooperative arrangements and partnerships with other government ministries, business organizations, and private and public sector groups. Ongoing strategies have been developed to build on our success and to expand the mutual benefits of these arrangements.

Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Partner with Infrastructure to determine, prioritize and implement the necessary changes to the Motor Vehicles System to support their Traffic Safety initiatives.*	Ongoing
• Complete the transition of Alberta On-Line to Internet access to facilitate a single point of electronic web-based access by subscribers to the Land Titles, Personal Property and Corporate Registry systems.*	1999-2000
• Partner with Resource Development to use both Registries On-Line and the Registry Agent network to provide access to crown land and mineral lease information.*	1999-2000
• Explore partnering opportunities to market our registration technology and information management system with other jurisdictions.	Ongoing

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Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Work with the survey community and other stakeholders to implement a digital plan registration process. This digital plan registration will significantly reduce the maintenance costs of the provincial mapping system.*	1999-2000
• Work with Justice to implement the *Contraventions Act*.*	1999-2000
• Continue partnership activities with Justice to ensure the payment of current fines through the registry agent network.*	1999-2000
• Continue to work with Health and Wellness to ensure that only information required to confirm birth registrations is transmitted from Health and Wellness to Vital Statistics.*	Ongoing
• Work with Treasury to investigate the feasibility of streamlining the corporate tax filing and annual return processes.*	Ongoing
• Consult with other provincial ministries and municipalities to develop a framework for reviewing and assessing Order-in-Council exemption requests from foreign companies for Intensive Livestock Operations and Agri-Forestry Operations.*	Ongoing

Performance Measures:

1) Customer satisfaction with the registration and licensing services provided by Registries and private sector partners which will include all delivery channels (applies to all three goals). Target set at 85%.

2) Comparison of Motor Vehicles registration and licensing fees with other Canadian jurisdictions to ensure that Alberta's fees remain competitive (applies to Goal #1). The target is to have fees below the national average.

* denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations

CORE BUSINESS #2 - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

To promote a fair marketplace for Albertans

A marketplace where competition is fair and consumers are confident will create a dynamic environment for growth. *Alberta Government Services* will promote fair market practices, industry self management and effective service delivery. It will do this by ensuring an effective and efficient regulatory process is in place through legislation, monitoring of the marketplace, enforcement, and by enhancing consumer awareness and self-reliance.

Goal #1 Ensure a regulatory framework is in place to support a fair marketplace

Albertans recognize that a much more complex marketplace exists today than in the past. The existing legislation does not include provisions to deal with emerging issues such as negative option billing, time shares and electronic transactions. It needs to be modernized and harmonized with legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. The result will be an effective regulatory framework that supports a fair marketplace for Albertans. It will also contribute to ensuring Alberta remains a safe place to live and raise families.

Key Strategies	**Time Frames**
• Review and update consumer and other related legislation to address emerging consumer issues or in accordance with the ministries legislative plan, e.g., the *Condominium Property Act* amendments. Ensure there are mechanisms in place for the effective administration and enforcement of the *Charitable Fund Raising Act*.	Ongoing
• Implement and explore additional regulatory changes to harmonize legislation and regulations with other jurisdictions, making it easier for consumers and businesses to operate in the national marketplace. Examples include:* ◦ Cost of Credit Disclosure ◦ Electronic Commerce.	Ongoing
• Establish an Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council to assume responsibility for industry regulation including licensing, enforcement and education standards.*	1999-2000
• Conclude the consultation process and develop the *Fair Trading Act* regulations.*	1999-2000
• Implement the *Fair Trading Act* by providing information and training for staff, stakeholders, and the public.*	1999-2002
• Work with stakeholders to replace the current *Co-operative Associations Act* with a new Act that is consistent with the *Federal Co-operatives Act* and addresses issues raised by the co-operative sector and other provinces.	1999-2001

* denotes strategies that support the Growth Summit recommendations

Key Strategies	Time Frames
• The Charitable Fund Raising Advisory Committee will review and provide recommendations on issues that arise under the *Charitable Fund Raising Act*, including percentage-based compensation and the sunset review of the regulation.	1999-2001

Goal #2 Promote fair market practices through compliance to regulation

Albertans recognize the need to protect those least able to protect themselves such as seniors, persons with special needs, etc. The Ministry will focus its resources on the more significant areas where there is the greatest impact on Albertans. The Ministry will also work closely with other jurisdictions to strengthen Alberta's ability to enforce consumer legislation.

Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Improve monitoring and enforcement efforts through reciprocal agreements with other federal/provincial/territorial jurisdictions to standardize regulations, enabling enforcement of regulations across the country.*	Ongoing
• Investigate allegations of contraventions of legislation. Resources will be focused on the marketplace problems that affect the most vulnerable consumers or impact a large number of consumers.*	1999-2000
• The CANSHARE sub-committee, which Alberta co-chairs, will work on the key issues to operationalize the national information sharing database. This will include the development of the following plans: implementation, MOU/cost sharing agreement and national and international information sharing.*	1999-2002

Goal #3 Improve marketplace awareness

Government Services will work in partnership with community-based groups, the private sector and other Canadian jurisdictions to enhance consumer awareness and self-reliance.

Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Provide advice and information to the public on legislation and other identified priorities.*	Ongoing
• Continue to partner with business associations to improve marketplace awareness. Examples include the Better Business Bureaus, the Alberta Auctioneers Association, etc.*	Ongoing
• Publish a regular enforcement bulletin to raise community awareness of consumer protection legislation, promote good business practices and highlight the enforcement role of the Ministry.*	2000-2001

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Key Strategies	Time Frames
• Host the next meeting of Ministers Responsible for Consumer Affairs to raise the profile of consumer protection programs in Alberta, and the profile of Alberta as a leader in working with industry and consumers.*	1999-2000
• Increase opportunities for Albertans to access information about consumer legislation and current consumer issues in order to enhance consumer awareness and self-reliance. Establish a consumer information center that uses advanced technology such as fax back, the Internet and an automated telephone information system to provide accurate, relevant information to Alberta consumers and businesses about legislation and current marketplace issues on a seven days a week, 24 hours a day basis.	1999-2000

Performance Measure:

1) A safe marketplace to do business for consumers and businesses. A survey of consumers and businesses will be undertaken, the results of which will be an indicator of how safe the Alberta marketplace is (applies to all three goals). The target will be based on this initial year.
2) Information from Project Phonebusters on the number of Albertan's who have lost money to a telemarketer and the amount of the loss will be used as a measure of marketplace safety. The target will be based on this initial year.

Regulatory Review Secretariat

Assists the Chairman (MLA) by reviewing departmental policies and processes, issues compliance certificates, works with departments to reduce overlap and duplication and streamline approval processes.

Support Services

The Ministry's mandate includes responsibility for two very distinct core businesses, the activities of which are carried out by three operating divisions. Staff from five specialized areas including Finance and Administration, Human Resource Services, Communications, Corporate Services, and Legal Services, provide important support to the operating divisions in achieving their business plan goals and strategies. The Ministry is committed to ensuring good communications with its customers, partners and staff.

The staff are unique in Government Services in that they must be knowledgeable of several different areas and flexible enough that they can easily move from one area to another when the need arises. One of the priorities over the course of this three-year business plan is to maximize the flexibility of the Ministry's human resources by ensuring the knowledge, skills and abilities are in place to accomplish current and future business plan goals. Continuous learning and staff development are encouraged. This is even more

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important today to meet the day-to-day challenges of a growing economy which has placed increased demands on staff.

Some of the key department-wide initiatives that will be undertaken in this business plan are in the areas of human resource development and information systems. They include:

Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy

A Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy is being implemented across government in response to the Growth Summit recommendations. It is intended to address issues such as the overall aging of the public service, stiff competition for scarce resources and rapidly changing skill needs. As part of our Human Resources Plan, the Ministry will undertake initiatives that will achieve the strategic intent of this government-wide strategy. This will include initiatives in the areas of corporate learning, leadership development and recruitment.

A comprehensive long-range succession plan that will target all areas within the Ministry will also be undertaken. One of the first areas to be targeted will be the Registries Division which will implement this plan in 1999-2000. Strategies have been developed for Registries to address this area of risk and reduce the potential impact on service delivery, performance and accountability standards. They include:

- exploring the use of interns in Land Titles
- partnering with the Personnel Administration Office to take advantage of overall government recruitment and succession planning strategies such as targeted advertising and recruitment strategies
- exploring linkages with training institutes.

Information Systems

The Ministry will continue to develop its information systems to support its core businesses. A solid infrastructure, robust external communications capability and current applications are necessary to ensure the Ministry can successfully meet its goal. Of particular importance is the need to reinvest in Registries' legacy computer systems to ensure the Ministry's ability to continue to support government's objectives for public safety and, security and revenue.

Regulatory Reform

The Ministry's regulatory sunset plan outlines a number of regulations that are scheduled for review from 1999 to 2001. The result will be a reduction in the number of regulations the Ministry administers, and more effective regulation where it is needed. This will contribute to the government's goal to eliminate all unnecessary regulation. The Ministry is committed to reviewing the remaining regulations on an ongoing basis.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES
MINISTRY INCOME STATEMENT
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1998-99 Actual	Restated 1999-2000 Budget	1999-2000 Forecast	Restated 2000-01 Target	Restated 2001-02 Target
REVENUE					
Premiums, Fees and Licences	290,728	283,491	290,025	289,034	294,685
Other Revenue	159	50	71	48	48
MINISTRY REVENUE	290,887	283,541	290,096	289,082	294,733
EXPENSE					
Program					
Ministry Support Services	5,572	6,049	6,049	6,129	6,325
Consumer Services	6,586	5,856	5,856	5,944	6,313
Registries Information and Distribution	38,484	33,967	34,482	34,407	35,395
Statutory Programs and Valuation Adjustments	499	400	110	400	400
MINISTRY EXPENSE	51,141	46,272	46,497	46,880	48,433
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(10)	-	-	-	-
MINISTRY NET OPERATING RESULT	239,736	237,269	243,599	242,202	246,300

CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1998-99 Actual	Restated 1999-2000 Budget	1999-2000 Forecast	Restated 2000-01 Target	Restated 2001-02 Target
Ministry Revenue	290,887	283,541	290,096	289,082	294,733
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Revenue	290,887	283,541	290,096	289,082	294,733
Ministry Program Expense	51,141	46,272	46,497	46,880	48,433
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Program Expense	**51,141**	**46,272**	**46,497**	**46,880**	**48,433**
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(10)	-	-	-	-
CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT	239,736	237,269	243,599	242,202	246,300